Press release | 28.01.2013

Bulgarian nuclear referendum

Government must hold course and oppose senseless Belene nuclear new-build

This weekend's referendum in Bulgaria on whether to allow construction to resume at the Belene nuclear power plant yielded an unclear outcome, as a result of a low turnout (under 22%) and failure to reach the required quorum (60%). The low turnout can in part be explained by the decision of voters to boycott the referendum due to the complex conditions set. As a consequence, the Bulgarian parliament will decide on the plans. Reacting to the outcome, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms**, who visited Bulgaria last week in the context of the campaign said:

"This outcome should be no surprise to anyone who has followed the political and media debate. With such a short campaign - only four weeks - it was impossible to truly reach the electorate, so it was never likely that the 60% quorum would be achieved.

"Despite the non-participation of 80% of the electorate and despite the result among those voting, there are some important outcomes of the campaign, notably the fact that there has finally been a debate in Bulgaria about the economic folly of nuclear power. Combined with the growing doubts about the safety of nuclear power, the nuclear new build planned at Belene is little more than fiction. That President Plevneliev and Prime Minister Borisov publicly opposed the new build was considered by many in Bulgaria as a strategic maneuver. This economically-justified opposition should be a starting point for further discussion. The debate in Parliament is the next step and can provide clarity. By rejecting nuclear power, also in Kozloduy, Bulgaria has the chance to open the door to a secure and sustainable energy future. The EU should actively encourage the energy transition in Bulgaria, which is in the interest of European security."

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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